

March 4, 2014

Dear Legislator,

As an Arizona Teacher of the Year and on behalf of the undersigned educators, I want to encourage you to support Arizona's students and teachers by staying the course with the current Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. We all believe that Arizona's teachers can take this rigorous framework, collaborate to create engaging and challenging lessons, and then teach Arizona's students who will achieve at a level that prepares them well for the next grade level, be it first grade, tenth grade, or as they prepare for college or career.

I personally have had experience teaching the new English Language Arts standards that were adopted in 2010. Our students are thriving! Each day they are having conversations about high-quality, thought provoking fictional texts, asking and answering questions as they build content knowledge through informational texts and making connections between multiple texts with the same topic. I recently spoke with a first grade teacher who shared her excitement about the standards and the opportunities they create for all of her students to engage in the work of the lesson. She mentioned that despite where her students are in the continuum of learning, they are all able to think critically and find evidence in text to support this deeper thinking. This teacher is not the only one who has reached out to me in support of the standards. In fact, I have received numerous notes and messages from current Arizona teachers throughout the state stating their sincere support for the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. Math teachers are seeing their students develop a deeper, conceptual understanding of standards and looking at math as a series of patterns and problems to be solved, not just a series of steps to be followed. A recent poll showed that **84% of Arizona teachers are enthusiastic about the implementation of the standards in their classrooms** and **83% believe the standards will have a positive impact on students' ability to think critically and use reasoning skills**. These standards provide what we need as teachers in Arizona to guide valuable learning experiences in our classrooms.

We know that there are still very loud voices working to repeal the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. We understand that bills are being considered to limit and/or prohibit their implementation. Perhaps the voice of those of us who have seen the benefits these standards have already brought to our schools, our students and our state has not been loud enough. Please note that it is a strong voice we want you to hear. We are united in our support of these standards and will also be united in our support of lawmakers who join us in helping Arizona students have the opportunity to learn and achieve at the higher level that is required by the College and Career Ready Standards.

We ask for your support of Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards. Please help us keep up the momentum that I see all over the state as teachers are learning how to bring these standards to life in their classrooms and as students are challenged to be truly ready for the future of Arizona. We believe that these new standards are the impetus for helping more of our students to become graduates who are ready for college and/or careers and for helping our state to become more competitive for business and industry that demand a better educated workforce. These standards are right for the economy of our state and they are right for kids. Those of us who signed this letter below stand ready to provide more information to you about the positive impact of the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. We invite you to visit the schools in your district and would be happy to set that up for you. We are always available to meet with you and your colleagues at any time to answer any questions or concerns you might have.

We thank you in advance for your support of the students, families, teachers, businesses and communities of our state by supporting the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards and the resources needed to continue their implementation.

Sincerely,

Kristie Martorelli, 2012 Arizona Teacher of the Year